



DONE DEAL!



'We have a deal': Biden announces infrastructure agreement

President Joe Biden, with a bipartisan group of senators, speaks Thursday June 24, 2021, outside the White House in Washington. Biden invited members of the group of 21 Republican and Democratic senators to discuss the infrastructure plan. From left are, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Biden, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., rear, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz, Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., and Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah.

Associated Press



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'We have a deal': Biden announces infrastructure agreement

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, JOSH BOAK and LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden announced on Thursday a hard-earned bipartisan agreement on a pared-down infrastructure plan that would make a start on his top legislative priority and validate his efforts to reach across the political aisle. He openly acknowledged that Democrats will likely have to tackle much of the rest on their own.

The bill's price tag at \$973 billion over five years, or \$1.2 trillion over eight years, is a scaled-back but still significant piece of Biden's broader proposals.

It includes more than a half-trillion dollars in new spending and could open the door to the president's more sweeping \$4 trillion proposals later on.

"When we can find common ground, working across party lines, that is what I will seek to do," said Biden, who deemed the deal "a true bipartisan effort, breaking the ice that too often has kept us frozen in place."

The president stressed that "neither side got everything they wanted in this deal; that's what it means to compromise," and said that other White House priorities would be tackled separately in a congressional budget process known as reconciliation.

He made clear that the two items would be done "in tandem" and that he would not sign the bipartisan deal without the other, bigger piece. Progressive members of Congress declared they would hold to the same approach.

"This reminds me of the days when we used to get an awful lot done up in the United States Congress," said Biden, a former Delaware senator, putting his hand on the shoulder of a stoic-looking Republican Sen. Rob Portman as the president made a surprise appearance with a bipartisan group of senators to announce the deal outside the White House.

The deal was struck after



Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., speaks with reporters as he walks at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

months of partisan rancor that has consumed Washington while Biden has insisted that something could be done despite skepticism from many in his own party. Led by Republican Portman of Ohio and Democrat Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, the group included some of the more independent lawmakers in the Senate, some known for bucking their parties.

And Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said, "It sends an important message to the world as well that America can function, can get things done."

The proposal includes both new and existing spending and highlights the struggle lawmakers faced in coming up with ways to pay for it.

The investments include \$109 billion on roads and highways, \$15 billion on electric vehicle infrastructure and transit systems and \$65 billion toward broadband, among other expenditures on airports, drinking water systems and resiliency efforts to tackle climate change.

Rather than Biden's proposed corporate tax hike that Republicans oppose or the gas tax increase that the president rejected, funds will be tapped from a range of sources -- without a full tally yet, according to the White House docu-

ment.

Money will come from COVID-19 relief funds approved in 2020 but not yet spent, as well as untapped unemployment insurance funds that Democrats have been hesitant to poach. Other revenue is expected by going harder after tax cheats by beefing up Internal Revenue Service enforcement.

The rest is a hodge-podge of asset sales and accounting tools, including funds coming from 5G telecommunication spectrum lease sales, strategic petroleum reserve and an expectation that the sweeping investment will generate economic growth -- what the White House calls the "macroeconomic impact of infrastructure investment."

The senators from both parties stressed that the deal will create jobs for the economy, a belief that clearly transcended the partisan interests and created a framework for the deal.

"We're going to keep working together--we're not finished," Sen. Mitt Romney said. "But America works, the Senate works."

For Biden, the deal was a welcome result.

Though for far less than the approximately \$2 trillion he originally sought, which is raising some ire on the

left, Biden had bet his political capital that he could work with Republicans and showcase that "that American democracy can deliver" and be a counter-example to rising autocracies across the globe.

Moreover, Biden and his aides believed that they needed a bipartisan deal on infrastructure to create a permission structure for more moderate Democrats -- including Sinema and Joe Manchin of West Virginia -- to then be willing to go for a party-line vote for the rest of the president's agenda.

There is still some skepticism on the left. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut said the bipartisan agreement is "way too small --paltry, pathetic. I need a clear, ironclad assurance that there will be a really adequate robust package" that will follow the bipartisan agreement.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, like Biden, warned that it must be paired with the president's bigger goals now being prepared by Congress under a process that could push them through the Senate with only Democratic votes.

"There ain't going to be a bipartisan bill without a reconciliation bill," Pelosi said. Portman had met privately ahead of the White House meeting with Senate Re-

publican leader Mitch McConnell at the Capitol and said afterward that the Kentucky senator "remains open-minded and he's listening still."

The announcement leaves unclear the fate of Biden's promises of massive investment to slow climate change, which Biden this spring called "the existential crisis of our times."

Biden's presidential campaign had helped win progressive backing with pledges of major spending on electric vehicles, charging stations, and research and funding for overhauling the U.S. economy to run on less oil, gas and coal. The administration is expected to push for some of that in future legislation.

But Sen. Cassidy, R-La., stressed that there are billions of dollars for resiliency against extreme weather and the impacts of climate change and deemed Thursday's deal a "beginning investment."

Biden has sought \$1.7 trillion in his American Jobs Plan, part of nearly \$4 trillion in broad infrastructure spending on roads, bridges and broadband internet but also including the so-called care economy of child care centers, hospitals and elder care.

With Republicans opposed to Biden's proposed corporate tax rate increase, from 21% to 28%, the group has looked at other ways to raise revenue.

Biden rejected their idea to allow gas taxes paid at the pump to rise with inflation, viewing it as a financial burden on American drivers.

The broad reconciliation bill would likely include tax increases on the wealthy and corporations, so a tension still exists over funding for some Republicans and business groups.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce came out Thursday applauding the bipartisan infrastructure agreement, but Neil Bradley, its executive vice president, warned that "some in Congress are trying to torpedo the deal" unless they get trillions in additional spending. □

New York court suspends Rudy Giuliani's law license

By **JIM MUSTIAN**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An appeals court suspended Rudy Giuliani from practicing law in New York Thursday because he made false statements while trying to get courts to overturn Donald Trump's loss in the presidential race.

An attorney disciplinary committee had asked the court to suspend Giuliani's license on the grounds that he'd violated professional conduct rules as he promoted theories that the election was stolen through fraud. The court agreed and said suspension should be immediate, even though disciplinary proceedings aren't yet complete, because there was an "immediate threat" to the public.

"The seriousness of respondent's uncontroverted misconduct cannot be overstated," the court wrote. "This country is being torn apart by continued attacks on the legitimacy of the 2020 election and of our current president, Joseph R. Biden." Trump called the suspension a politically motivated "witch hunt," while Giuliani said it was a "disgrace" on his afternoon radio show. The court's opinion, Giuliani said, was based on hearsay and "could have been written by the Democratic National Committee."



In this June 21, 2021, file photo former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani speaks during a campaign event for Republican mayoral candidate Curtis Sliwa in New York.

Associated Press

"The bar association should give me an award," Giuliani told listeners on WABC-AM. "I defended an unpopular client. I've been threatened with death. I've had a good deal of my income taken away. I've lost friends over it."

"This is happening to shut me up," he added. "They want Giuliani quiet." The ruling will prevent Giuliani from representing clients as a lawyer. The court held that Giuliani, as a lawyer for Trump, "communicated demonstrably false and misleading statements to courts, lawmakers and the public at large."

Giuliani, a former New York City mayor and U.S. attorney in Manhattan, claimed the investigation violated his First Amendment right to free speech and that he did not knowingly make false statements.

The court rejected those arguments, noting that in Pennsylvania, Giuliani failed to "provide a scintilla of evidence for any of the varying and wildly inconsistent numbers of dead people he factually represented voted in Philadelphia during the 2020 presidential election." "False statements intended to foment a loss of confidence in our

elections and resulting loss of confidence in government generally damage the proper functioning of a free society," the court wrote.

Interim suspensions are often a precursor to disbarment but are typically "reserved for lawyers convicted of a crime," said Bruce Green, a former federal prosecutor who directs the Louis Stein Center for Law and Ethics at the Fordham University School of Law. "It's rarely done in cases involving lying lawyers."

Still, Giuliani will be allowed to fight the suspension and even call witnesses as part

of his challenge — a process that could take months to play out — and Giuliani's attorneys said they expect him to be reinstated "once the issues are fully explored at a hearing." "He gets another day in court," Green said. Giuliani was the primary mouthpiece for Trump's false claims of election fraud after the 2020 vote, standing at a press conference in front of Four Seasons Total Landscaping outside Philadelphia on the day the race was called for Biden and saying they would challenge what he claimed was a vast conspiracy by Democrats.

Lies around the election results helped push an angry mob of pro-Trump rioters to storm the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 in an effort to stop the certification of President Biden's victory. Since that time, Republicans have used that lie to push stricter voting laws nationwide.

Federal agents raided Giuliani's home and office in April, taking electronic devices including phones and computers.

The investigation includes an examination of whether Giuliani was required to register as a foreign agent in the U.S. Some of the Ukrainian figures Giuliani was worked with were also interested in getting his help lobbying the Trump administration. □

Chicago confirms 1st Black woman as city fire commissioner

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago City Council on Wednesday confirmed the appointment of the city's first Black female fire commissioner.

Annette Nance-Holt was serving as acting fire commissioner following the retirement earlier this year of Richard Ford.

When she appointed Nance-Holt acting fire commissioner, Mayor Lori Lightfoot noted she had more than three decades of proven leadership and a passion for public service.

Nance-Holt will take over

a fire department with a history of racism and sexism. She joined the department four years after the first women joined the ranks.

Earlier this year, Chicago's inspector general issued a report recommending the department put in place stronger policies to deal with the sexual harassment and racial discrimination. Last month, she welcomed 42 new members to the department, including 13 women and 15 minorities. It was during that ceremony that Lightfoot nominated her for the

top post.

"Graduates, look to Commissioner Nance-Holt's exemplary example of sacrifice and service, even in the face of her own personal pain and tragedy," Lightfoot said. "She is the real deal."

Nance-Holt first gained public notice when her 16-year-old son, Blair Holt, was shot to death in 2007 on a city bus shielding a classmate from gunfire. She went on to establish the nonprofit Purpose Over Pain, which helps parents who have lost children to gun violence. □



Annette Nance-Holt, who lost her 16-year-old son, Blair to gun violence in 2007, speaks at a news conference in Chicago, Tuesday, July 7, 2015.

Associated Press

Many feared dead after Florida beachfront condo collapses

By WILFREDO LEE,
TERRY SPENCER and
DAVID FISCHER
Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP)—A wing of a 12-story beachfront condo building collapsed with a roar in a town outside Miami early Thursday, killing at least one person and trapping residents in rubble and twisted metal. Rescuers pulled out dozens of survivors and continued to look for more.

Nearly 100 people were still unaccounted for at mid-day, authorities said, raising fears that the death toll could climb sharply. But officials did not know how many were in the tower when it fell around 1:30 a.m.

"The building is literally pancaked," Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said. "That is heartbreaking because it doesn't mean, to me, that we are going to be as successful as we wanted to be in finding people alive."

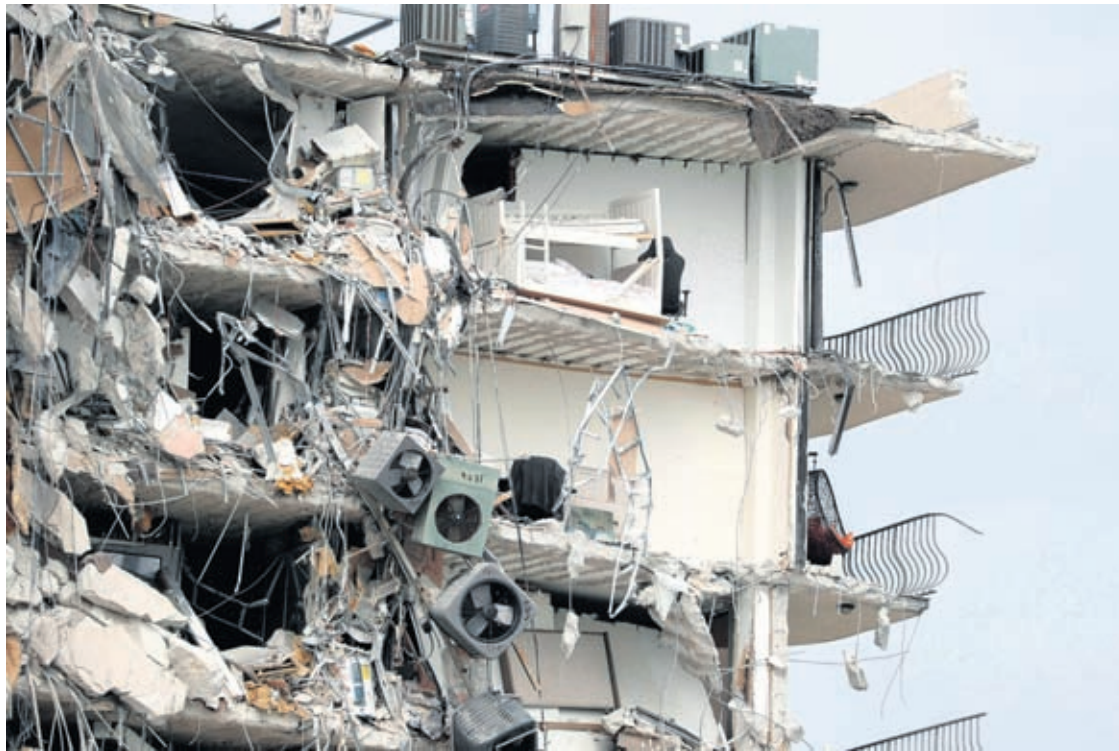
Hours after the collapse, searchers were trying to reach a trapped child whose parents were believed to be dead. In another case, rescuers saved a mother and child, but the woman's leg had to be amputated to remove her from the rubble, Frank Rollason, director of Miami-Dade Emergency Management, told the Miami Herald.

Video showed fire crews removing a boy from the wreckage, but it was not clear whether he was the same person mentioned by Rollason.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, who toured the scene, said television did not capture the scale of what happened. Rescue crews are "doing everything they can to save lives. That is ongoing, and they're not going to rest," he said.

Teams of 10 to 12 rescuers were entering the rubble at a time with dogs and other equipment, working until they tire from the heavy lifting, then making way for a new team, said Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis, the state's fire marshal.

"They're not going to stop



Items and debris dangle from a section of the oceanfront Champlain Towers South Condo that partially collapsed Thursday, June 24, 2021, in the Surfside area of Miami, Fla.

Associated Press

just because of nightfall," Patronis told Miami television station WPLG. "They just may have a different path they pursue."

Patronis said he was deeply moved by the image of a bunk bed near the now-exposed top of the building. "Somebody was probably sleeping in it," he said. "There's all those what-ifs." Authorities did not say what may have caused the collapse. On video footage captured from nearby, the center of the building appeared to fall first, with a section nearest the ocean teetering and coming down seconds later as a huge dust cloud swallowed the neighborhood.

Work was being done on the building's roof, but Burkett said he did not see how that could have been the cause.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said she got a call from President Joe Biden, who promised to provide any federal aid that was requested.

"We'll be there," he said at the White House.

Hotels already had opened to some displaced residents, the mayor said, and deliveries of food, medicine and more were being hastily arranged. Rescue officials tried to determine how many people might be missing and asked residents to check in with them.

About half of the building's roughly 130 units were affected, the mayor told a news conference. Rescuers pulled at least 35 people from the wreckage by mid-morning, and heavy equipment was being brought in to help stabilize the structure to give them more access, Raide Jadallah of Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue said.

The tower has a mix of seasonal and year-round residents, and while the building keeps a log of guests, it does not keep track of when owners are in residence, Burkett said.

Nicholas Fernandez spent hours after the collapse trying to call two friends who were staying in the building with their young daughter. The family had come to the United States to avoid the COVID-19 outbreak in their home country of Argentina, said Fernandez, of Miami.

"The hope is that, perhaps, someone hears the call. I know there are dogs inside," he said. "I know it may sound ridiculous what I'm saying but there's always hope until we hear different."

A total of 22 South Americans were missing in the collapse — nine from Argentina, six from Paraguay, four from Venezuela and three from Uruguay, according to officials in those countries.

The collapse, which appeared to affect one leg of the L-shaped tower, tore away walls and left some homes in the still-standing part of the building exposed in what looked like a giant dollhouse.

Television footage showed beds, tables and chairs inside. Air conditioners hung from some parts of the building, where wires dangled, and part of the parking area beneath the structure appeared collapsed in aerial photos.

Piles of rubble and debris surrounded the area, and cars up to two blocks away were coated with a light layer of dust from the debris. As crews went through the rubble around midday, smoke wafted through the area. The source was not clear.

Barry Cohen, 63, said he and his wife were asleep in the building when he first heard what he thought was a crack of thunder. The couple went onto their balcony, then opened the door to the building's hallway to find "a pile of rubble and dust and smoke billowing around."

Eventually rescued with his wife by firefighters, Cohen said he raised concerns years ago about whether nearby construction might be causing damage to the building after seeing cracked pavers on the

pool deck.

Surfside City Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer told WPLG that the building's county-mandated 40-year recertification process was ongoing. Salzhauer said the process was believed to be proceeding without difficulty. A building inspector was on-site Wednesday. "I want to know why this happened," Salzhauer said. "That's really the only question. ... And can it happen again? Are any other of our buildings in town in jeopardy?"

At an evacuation site set up in a nearby community center, people who live in buildings neighboring the collapse gathered after being told to flee. Some wept. Some were still dressed in pajamas. Some children tried to sleep on mats spread on the floor.

Jennifer Carr was asleep in a neighboring building when she was awakened by a loud boom and her room shook.

She thought it was a thunderstorm but checked the weather app on her phone and saw none. The building's fire alarms went off, and she and her family went outside and saw the collapse.

"It was devastation," Carr said. "People were running and screaming."

The seaside condo development was built in 1981 in the southeast corner of Surfside. It had a few two-bedroom units currently on the market, with asking prices of \$600,000 to \$700,000 in an area with a neighborhood feel that provides a stark contrast to the glitz and bustle of nearby South Beach.

The area has a mix of new and old apartments, houses, condominiums and hotels, with restaurants and stores serving an international combination of residents and tourists.

The main oceanside drag is lined with glass-sided, luxury condominium buildings, but more modest houses are on the inland side. Among the neighborhood's residents are snowbirds, Russian immigrants and Orthodox Jewish families. □

Report: over 600 bodies found at Indigenous school in Canada

By JIM MORRIS

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Leaders of Indigenous groups in Canada said Thursday investigators have found more than 600 unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school for Indigenous children — a discovery that follows last month's report of 215 bodies found at another school.

The bodies were discovered at the Marieval Indian Residential School, which operated from 1899 to 1997 where the Cowessess First Nation is now located, about 85 miles (135 kilometers) east of Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan.

A search with ground-penetrating radar resulted in 751 "hits," indicating that at least 600 bodies were buried in the area, said Chief Cadmus Delorme of the Cowessess. The radar operators have said their results could have a margin of error of 10%.

"We want to make sure when we tell our story that we're not trying to make numbers sound bigger than they are," Delorme said. "I like to say over 600, just to be assured."

He said the search continues and the radar hits will be assessed by a technical team and the numbers



People listen during a ceremony and vigil for the 215 children whose remains were found buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in Vancouver, British Columbia, on National Indigenous Peoples Day, Monday, June 21, 2021.

will be verified in coming weeks.

Delorme said that the graves were marked at one time, but that the Roman Catholic Church that operated the school had removed the markers.

On Twitter, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was "terribly saddened" to learn of the latest discovery.

"My heart breaks for the Cowessess First Nation following the discovery of Indigenous children buried

at the former Marieval Residential School," he said, adding that "we will tell the truth about these injustices."

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe said the entire province mourns the discovery of the unmarked graves.

Florence Sparvier, 80, said she attended the Marieval Indian Residential School.

"The nuns were very mean to us," she said.

"We had to learn how to be Roman Catholic. We

couldn't say our own little blessings."

Nuns at the school were "condemning about our people" and the pain inflicted continues generations later, Sparvier said.

"We learned how to not like who we were," she said. "That has gone on and it's still going on."

Last month the remains of 215 children, some as young as 3 years old, were found buried on the site of what was once Canada's largest Indigenous residen-

tial school near Kamloops, British Columbia.

Following that discovery, Pope Francis expressed his pain over the discovery and pressed religious and political authorities to shed light on "this sad affair." But he didn't offer the apology sought by First Nations and by the Canadian government.

"An apology is one stage in the way of a healing journey," Delorme said.

"This was a crime against humanity, an assault on First Nations," said Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous First Nations in Saskatchewan. He said he expects more graves will be found on residential school grounds across Canada.

"We will not stop until we find all the bodies," he said.

From the 19th century until the 1970s, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools, the majority of them run by Roman Catholic missionary congregations, in a campaign to assimilate them into Canadian society.

The Canadian government has admitted that physical and sexual abuse was rampant in the schools, with students beaten for speaking their native languages. □

Associated Press

U.S., Germany confront rising antisemitism, Holocaust denial

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

BERLIN (AP) — The United States and Germany launched a new initiative Thursday to stem an alarming rise in antisemitism and Holocaust denial around the world.

The two governments announced the start of a U.S.-Germany Holocaust Dialogue that seeks to reverse the trend that gained traction during the coronavirus pandemic amid a surge in political populism across Europe and the U.S. The dialogue creates a way to develop educational and messaging tools to teach youth and others about the crimes of Nazis and their collaborators.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and several Holocaust survivors were present for the launch at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. All cited links between Holocaust denial, revisionism and ignorance to growing antisemitism as well as to broader discrimination against minorities.

"Holocaust denial and other forms of antisemitism often go hand in hand with homophobia, xenophobia, racism, other hatred," said Blinken, who is the step-son of a Holocaust survivor. "It's also a rallying cry for those who seek to tear down our democracies, which we've seen in both our countries,

(and) often a precursor to violence." "In recent years, we have seen antisemitism and racism eating into our society," Maas said. "Just think of the Yellow Star badge as seen at demonstrations against COVID measures, of the torrent of antisemitic conspiracy theories on the Internet, of the attacks on synagogues and on Jewish people living in our countries, of the rioters in front of the Bundestag or the rampaging mob in the U.S. capital."

With advancing age severely reducing the number of Holocaust survivors and dimming first-hand memories of the atrocities, Blinken and Maas said the new dialogue would pro-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, and German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas, center, listen as Holocaust Survivor Margot Friedlander, right, speaks during a ceremony for the launch of a U.S.-Germany Dialogue on Holocaust Issues at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Associated Press

duce innovative ways to educate younger generations about the Holocaust and the troubling buildup

that led to the mass extermination of Jews and others in Nazi Germany and elsewhere. □

'Horrible:' 64 dead in Ethiopian airstrike on Tigray

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP)

— Ethiopia's military on Thursday said it was responsible for a deadly airstrike on a busy marketplace in the country's Tigray region. Health workers said the attack killed at least 64 people, including children, but the military insisted only combatants were targeted.

A doctor who managed to reach the market in Togoga village after Ethiopian soldiers blocked medical teams from responding to Tuesday's attack described a "horrible" scene of badly wounded people lying on the ground, crying in pain with no medical care.

"It was very traumatizing," he told The Associated Press. "I think most of the patients, they died because we were late there, because care wasn't available."

Most of the patients taken to regional hospitals weren't critical, he said: "The critical patients were already dead." Like others, he spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

A military spokesman, Col. Getnet Adane, told journalists that fighters supporting the Tigray region's former leaders had assembled to celebrate Martyrs' Day when the airstrike occurred.

"The Ethiopian air force uses the latest technology, so it conducted a precision strike that was successful," he said.

But the doctor who reached the scene said "most of the patients we found were mothers, chil-



In this image made from video, an injured victim of an alleged airstrike on a village arrives in an ambulance at the Ayder Referral Hospital in Mekele, in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

dren and elderly fathers. There were few young men."

The airstrike wounded more than 100 people, half of them seriously, a regional health official said. Health workers said Ethiopian forces blocked medical teams from responding and shot at a Red Cross ambulance trying to reach the scene. Bodies were still being pulled from the rubble and dozens of survivors were still arriving at regional hospitals with shrapnel and blunt trauma wounds two days after the airstrike, said a doctor in the regional capital, Mekele. The International Committee of the Red Cross called the transport of seriously injured to Mekele "a matter of life and death."

Even on Thursday, United Nations spokesman Ste-

phane Dujarric told reporters that the U.N. still hasn't been able to reach the scene. "Between the fighting and different groups on the ground we need clearance to go and we've just not been able to get it," he said.

The airstrike, one of the worst massacres of the war, came amid some of the fiercest fighting in Tigray since the conflict began in November as Ethiopian forces, supported by neighboring Eritrea, pursue Tigray's former leaders.

The Ethiopian military spokesman denied Tigray fighters' claims of gains in recent days, saying Ethiopian forces had been deployed to other locations for Monday's national election.

The United States and the European Union have con-

demned the airstrike in Togoga that left children, including a 1-year-old baby, screaming in pain.

A "reprehensible act," the U.S. State Department said. "Denying victims urgently needed medical care is heinous and absolutely unacceptable. We urge the Ethiopian authorities to ensure full and unhindered medical access to the victims immediately. We also call for an urgent and independent investigation."

The U.S. also called for an immediate cease-fire in Tigray, where thousands of civilians have been killed and 350,000 people are now facing one of the world's worst famines in years.

"At least 33,000 children in inaccessible parts of Tigray are severely malnourished and face imminent death

without immediate help," the latest U.N. humanitarian update said Thursday. Ethiopia claims that aid is being delivered to most of Tigray's 6 million people, but aid workers have said they have been repeatedly denied access to several parts of the region by soldiers.

With Ethiopia recently declaring Tigray's former ruling party a terrorist group, concerns have been widespread among Tigrayans, aid workers and others that anyone seen as linked to Tigray fighters, including civilians, could be targeted.

Tigrayans were appalled by Ethiopia's assertion that the airstrike was aimed only at combatants.

"It's an insult to the people and adding salt to the wounds, you know?" said Hailu Kebede, a former Togoga resident and official with the Salsay Woyane Tigray opposition party. He described how his brother, who has a shop in the market, ran for his life while his nearby home was destroyed.

"We know the area. I grew up there. There were no combatants," Hailu said. "The destroyed homes are those of my friends and my family."

One of his friends lost a child in the airstrike while another child had her hand amputated, he said.

The real death toll from the airstrike could be even higher because some people likely took the dead home to their nearby villages and buried them without telling regional officials, Hailu said. □

Associated Press

U.N.: 275 million people used drugs worldwide in 2020

BERLIN (AP) — Around 275 million people used drugs worldwide last year, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders, according to the World Drug Report released Thursday by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna.

The report also said many countries saw a rise in the use of cannabis during the coronavirus pandemic. In surveys of health professionals across 77 countries, 42% said cannabis use had increased. A rise in the non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs was also observed in the same period.

The report further noted that in the last 24 years, cannabis potency had increased as much as four times in some parts, even as the percentage of adolescents who perceived the drug as harmful fell by as much as 40%. This development came despite evidence that cannabis use is associated with a variety of health and other harms, especially among regular long-term users. "Lower perception of drug use risks has been linked to higher rates of drug use, and the findings of UNODC's 2021 World Drug Report highlight the need to close the gap between perception and reality to

educate young people and safeguard public health," UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly said. According to the latest global estimates, about 5.5% of those between 15 and 64 have used drugs at least once in the past year, while 36.3 million people, or 13% of the total number of people who use drugs, suffer from drug use disorders, the report said. Globally, over 11 million people are estimated to inject drugs, half of whom are living with Hepatitis C. Opioids continue to account for the largest burden of disease attributed to drug use, according to the report. □

Ex-Colombian rebels, kidnapping victims meet face to face

By **ASTRID SUÁREZ**

Associated Press

BUCARAMANGA, Colombia (AP) — Men and women who were kidnapped by Colombia's biggest guerrilla group during a decades long internal conflict met face to face with their captors Wednesday during an event meant for the rebels to admit their responsibility, a step toward reconciliation contemplated in a peace deal signed in 2016 by the government and the combatants. The emotional meeting between the victims and members of the now-defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by its Spanish acronym FARC, was convened by a commission with no judicial powers but responsibility for helping clarify what exactly happened during the conflict.

"I would never have imagined in the depths of my captivity that one day I would have the possibility of a human dialogue with my former captors," said former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, who was kidnapped for six years and four months. "... We can say that love is greater, that there is hope, and if there is hope, there is a future."

Former FARC members have previously asked for



Former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, who was abducted while campaigning by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia rebels, is overcome by emotion as she speaks during an event at the Truth Commission to commemorate victims of the country's decades-long armed conflict, in Bogota, Colombia, Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

Associated Press

forgiveness from victims and acknowledged the kidnappings of more than 21,300 people throughout the South American nation, but the Truth Commission and victims, including Betancourt, saw Wednesday's event as an opportunity for ex-leaders of the group to admit their actions without cynicism or justifying them as a response to the conditions of war. Colombians remain divided over who should be held to account for the de-

cades of violence that only diminished with the peace accord that called for the disarmament of the FARC. The agreement also established a tribunal that offers perpetrators reduced sentences if they help with investigations and are willing to provide reparations to victims.

Betancourt was kidnapped in February 2002 while she was campaigning. She was rescued in June 2008 when the Colombian army deceived the FARC with a fic-

titious humanitarian operation after infiltrating secret communications. Three members of the U.S. military and 11 individuals with the Colombian armed forces who had been kidnapped for up to a decade were also rescued.

The FARC in 2019 recognized for the first time its responsibility for the kidnapping, and in April rebels accepted before the postwar tribunal the accusation for crimes against humanity.

"We present ourselves here,

with our heads bowed and our hearts in hand," said Rodrigo Londoño, the last FARC commander and now leader of a political party made up of ex-combatants. "... We are truly sorry and hope that some time they can forgive us for the unspeakable damage inflicted."

The investigations by the tribunal have concluded that the FARC subjected its victims to torture, sexual violence, forced displacement and attacks on their personal dignity. The kidnappings were used to finance their operations with the ransom they demanded from families of the victims, force the exchange of imprisoned guerrilla members and control territories. Roberto Lacouture, who was kidnapped in 1989, was visibly moved during the event. He said he disagrees with the peace accord but decided to attend the meeting to ask the FARC to "tell the truth." "I suddenly cannot forgive ... I don't know what will happen, but what I am not going to do is forget all the atrocities that have been committed," Lacouture said. Betancourt, who now lives in France, said after the meeting that she had expected more explanations and repentance from the ex-combatants. □

Regional human rights body condemns Nicaragua crackdown

MANAGUA, Nicaragua

(AP) — The president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights said Wednesday that Nicaragua had entered a new phase of repression with at least 20 opposition figures arrested in recent weeks and "constant human rights violations." Antonia Urrejola told members of the Organization of American States' Permanent Council that the crackdown appeared to be part of a government strategy to snuff out internal dissidence ahead of the Nov. 7 elections, in which President Daniel Ortega will seek a fourth consecutive term. An extended "de-

facto state of exception" in Nicaragua has "intensified the closure of democratic spaces," she said.

In the past month, the regional human rights body has received 27 requests for protective measures for people persecuted or threatened in Nicaragua, virtually the same number as in all of 2020.

Urrejola said many of the recent arrests involved the use of force and raids of homes without judicial orders. Some people were taken to secret hearings without legal representation. Authorities refuse to tell relatives where they are being held or the state of their health.

Ortega's government has maintained that massive street protests sparked by a change to the social security system in April 2018, were an attempted coup that received foreign backing. At least 328 people were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded as the government put down those protests in the following months, according to the commission.

Many of those arrested in recent weeks face allegations of crimes against the state, often involving receiving funding from overseas. Nicaragua's representative at the OAS, Ricardo Alvarado, described the commission's report as



Nicaragua supporters protest outside of the Organization of the American States asking to free political prisoners and stop the government's human rights violations against critics, during a rally in Washington, Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

Associated Press

"fallacious and bad intentioned." It charged that the commission was "used

as the tip of the spear by the United States against Nicaragua." □

LOCAL



Strong fourth quarter economic rebound; however, not enough to compensate for the lockdown impacts in the previous months

ORANJESTAD — Today the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) published the **State of the Economy for the fourth quarter of 2020**. This publication provides a synopsis of the local and international economic developments of this period. The domestic highlights are presented below, including a summary of main economic indicators.

Economic activities

bounced back in the fourth quarter of 2020

During the fourth quarter of 2020, the Aruban economy continued its steady path to recovery amidst continued uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs of a gradual recovery were noted, as tourism picked up vis-à-vis the preceding quarter. Tourism credits per night in the third and fourth quarters of 2020 reached historically high levels, supported in part by a higher ADR and buoyant spending by visitors. This finding shows once more that the gains from tourism can be captured with fewer visitors, even though tourist spending could flatten out again in the medium term. For the year 2020, however, the total number of stay-over visitors registered a significant contraction, while the

number of cruise visitors plummeted. As a result of these developments, total tourism credits noted a 49.2 percent reduction compared to 2019.

Nonetheless, for the year 2020, estimated real GDP shrank by 22.3 percent compared to 2019, as reflected by available consumption, investment and export indicators. The government policy actions to contain employment and social fallout during the crisis, specifically the Small and Medium Enterprise Schemes (SME), the unemployment benefits (FASE), the wage subsidy (LSR) were necessary to prevent further harm to the economy in the short-term. The programs were mostly financed by the Dutch government through the provision of loans. In the medium-term, however, fiscal risks exist, which can be attenuated by some form of debt forgiveness, buoyant economic rebound, and timely implementation of structural (tax) reforms.

Inflation turns negative

The 12-month average CPI inflation sustained its downward path that begun in

November 2019, reaching -1.3 percent at the end of December 2020. The deflation was due mainly to the energy component, due to a downward adjustment of electricity tariffs in January 2020, which pushed inflation down by 1.3 percentage points in December 2020. This development reveals the high susceptibility of Aruba's inflation to cost-push factors. Oil prices are anticipated to increase throughout 2021, while price hedging to some extent can cushion these swings, as can a further transition to sustainable energy.

Net borrowings from abroad partly offset current account deficit

The current account of the balance of payments recorded an Afl. 580.5 million deficit in 2020. This outcome was spurred primarily by a severely reduced surplus on the services account, resulting from the plunge in tourism credits, following the COVID-19 travel restrictions. Nevertheless, the smaller deficit on the goods account offset some of the movements on the services account, resulting from lackluster consumption due to loss in income and less tourists in relation to the impact of the pandemic.

The financial account registered a net borrowing of Afl. 579.4 million from abroad during 2020. The outcome on the financial account for 2020 reflected primarily increases in financial liabilities related to portfolio investment, other investment, and direct investment. The increases in the other investment and portfolio investment liabilities were associated largely with liquidity support from the Netherlands to the Government of Aruba and other foreign borrowing by the Government of Aruba.

International reserves remained above benchmarks

When compared to end 2019, broad money expanded by Afl. 223.2 million, reaching Afl. 4,792.0 million at the end of the fourth quarter of 2020. The expansion was attributed to a growth in international reserves (excluding revaluation differences), offset partly by a contraction in net domestic assets. As a result of the depressed domestic import demand, government loans received from abroad, and the imposed foreign exchange restrictions, international reserves remained above the benchmarks monitored by the CBA at the end of 2020.

Government financial deficit worsened

The pandemic had a deep toll on government finances during 2020. The financial deficit reached Afl. 813.5 million, contrasted to an Afl. 3.1 million deficit in 2019. The jump in the financial deficit was due to substantially higher expenditures related mainly to the COVID-19 liquidity support measures to various groups in the Aruban community, including businesses, combined with a sharp drop in revenues in 2020. As a result of the widened deficit, total government debt surged by Afl. 826.7 million (+19.1 percent) to Afl. 5,145.6 million in 2020, when compared to the year before.

The complete publication is available on the CBA's website www.cbaruba.org.

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Join DCNA's Free Big Live Nature Quiz and Win a Sailing Trip

KRALENDIJK, BONAIRE — The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) invites all residents of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Maarten, and Sint Eustatius to participate in the first Big Live Nature Quiz on Friday 2nd of July, 6 pm. It's free, online, live, interactive and includes questions about Dutch Caribbean animals. This fun quiz is in English but questions will also have Dutch and Papiamentu subtitles. You can participate online from home or go to one of the broadcast locations on your island. You can join alone or form a team with max 4 friends/family/colleagues. The winning team will win a sailing/snorkel trip around their island. Make sure to register at biglivenaturequiz.org.

**Date and Time**

Citizens of the six Dutch Caribbean islands ages 18 and older are invited to participate in the first annual Big Live Nature Quiz for adults. The quiz will take place on Friday, July 2, 2021, from 6 pm- 7pm AST. There will be a short break in the middle to socialize and grab some food and drinks to prepare for round two.

Teams

Join alone or form a team with max 4 friends/family/colleagues.

Location

You can participate in two ways. Participants can play online from work or home with friends and family or go to a designated bar or

restaurant (Bonaire: Hillside, Saba: Long Haul, St. Eustatius: Blue Bead Bar & Restaurant), St. Maarten: Dinghy Dock Sailors Bar) where the quiz will be live broadcasted.

Reserve your spot

Groups consisting of one to four members must pre-register at biglivenaturequiz.org to participate. People wishing to participate at a live broadcast location must also reserve a table at the bar (Bonaire: Hillside, Saba: Long Haul, St. Eustatius: Blue Bead Bar & Restaurant), St. Maarten: Dinghy Dock Sailors Bar).

Requirements

It is not necessary to prepare or study for the quiz in

advance. All you need to participate is an online registration (biglivenaturequiz.org), an internet connection, a computer, a phone to answer questions, and a good attitude.

If you form a team and join from home or work, you need to physically get together behind 1 computer and only need 1 cell phone per team to send your team-answer.

If you join from one of the designated bars, you only need to register online (biglivenaturequiz.org), reserve a table at the (Bonaire: Hillside, Saba: Long Haul, St. Eustatius: Blue Bead Bar & Restaurant), St. Maarten: Dinghy Dock Sailors Bar) and bring a cell phone.

Theme: Dutch Caribbean animals

The quiz will have a total of 35 multiple choice trivia questions. The quiz will be in English but questions will also have Dutch and Papiamentu subtitles. There will be five categories: Marine Animals, Terrestrial Animals, Sounds in Nature, Special Species, and People and Nature.

Prices

The winning team will win a sailing/snorkel trip around their island. Second and third place teams will receive t-shirts and hats. Yearly Quiz for adults and kids

The DCNA supports STINAPA Bonaire, CARMABI on Curaçao, Aruba National

Park Foundation, Saba Conservation Foundation, STENAPA on St Eustatius and Nature Foundation Sint Maarten amongst others with their nature education programs. The online Big Live Nature Quiz was created to educate citizens about nature conservation in a fun interactive way, to instill pride about the islands' nature, encourage eco-friendly practices, support the parks conservation projects, and to connect people throughout the Dutch Caribbean. This is a yearly event for adults and kids. The Kids edition is planned for the beginning of October.

The Big Live Nature Quiz is generously funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and DCNA's activities are supported by the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

Follow the Big Live Nature Quiz

Check out DCNA's Facebook (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance), Instagram (DCNANature) or biglivenaturequiz.org. If you have any questions, send an email to research@DCNANature.org or projects@DCNANature.org or call us at +599-717-5010. ☐





NOORD — Tuscany Residence Aruba is found in one of the most popular neighborhoods of Aruba, close to the shopping and nightlife of Palm Beach, and best of all it is within walking distance of the finest white beaches and clear blue ocean. Tuscany Residence Aruba brings luxury living to a new level.

180 exclusive properties will be built suitable for everyone's wishes. The buildings varies greatly in layout and offers amazing views. You can choose from 2 or 3-story villas with a private pool and a rooftop terrace, condominiums, townhouses. Tuscany Residence Aruba enjoys an abundance of luxury amenities and services. Soon a new concept consisting of 18, 1 and 2-story water villas. Everything is aimed at providing homeowners and holiday makers of Tuscany Residence Aruba with a relaxing stay.

Dutch design

Tuscany Residence Aruba is a residence that is currently being built and will develop in the coming years into a luxury residential resort with various types of homes and many amenities such as swimming pools, restaurant, bar, offices, meeting rooms, gym, wellness and more. The combination of the beautiful Dutch modern international architecture and the Aruban palm trees creates a luxurious Aruban feeling and relaxed atmosphere in this resort. Tuscany Residence Aruba is the perfect choice for couples and families. Bas de Groot, Managing Director of Tuscany Residence Aruba adds, "We differ from traditional building, our design distinguishes itself." At 8 minutes' walk from Palm Beach, designed in a European style with high-quality materials, on property land and with buying possibilities from condos to townhouses to villas, Tuscany Residence is a dream comes true. "We just completed the community pool and the first villa. Eight townhouses are ready and three are still available. There is lots to see, you are invited. Our quality will convince you."

We take care of it all

De Groot adds, "Our project is in continuous construction which builds confidence. Aside of the town houses and villa you can see the community pool now, providing you with the idea of style and quality of our residence." He continues saying that maintenance, property management, rental program and safety are taken care of. "You can log in from abroad and manage your property for rental or view your administration." The great thing about Tuscany is that it offers everything equal to a resort but you do not need to wait for an elevator to bring you up,

Welcome to Tuscany Residence Aruba: Aruba's Luxury Residential Resort

worry about parking space or noisy neighbors. "We have got space and different size offerings making this more a community feel rather than a packed condo building." He also emphasizes that the location is one of the best on Aruba as it is quiet and close to Palm Beach.



Townhouses

3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms

Price starting U.S. \$ 347,000, community fee U.S. \$ 200/month

Still 3 Available.



Luxury Villas

3 and 4 bedrooms, 3.5 and

4.5 bathrooms, Private Pool

Price starting U.S. \$ 788,000,

community fee U.S. \$ 275/mth

Still 2 Available.



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The Concept: 18- 2 and 3 bedroom villas around 1 communal pool with covered terrace and garden at the pool side. Soon we will start the presale and if you are interested please contact us!

Reasons to buy

Reasons to consider Aruba property ownership, at Tuscany Residence Aruba

- Excellent price-quality ratio
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- Onsite Maintenance Team, Property Management & Rental Program

Are you looking for a safe, quiet, residential area where you will meet a mix of local and foreign owners? Do you feel for a warm community with amenities like wellness, gym, restaurants, pools and this all within a structure where the residence takes care of your property management while you are not here? Can the highest European quality and solid working structure take away your preoccupations while you are home? Than meet us, we are here to convince you with quality! ☐



Tuscany Residence Aruba
Salina Cerca 131, Noord, Aruba
info@tuscanyresidencearuba.com
(+297) 280 4664
(+297) 733 2424

Student loan payments to restart; here's how to get help

By ANNA HELHOSKI
of NerdWallet

For 42.9 million student loan borrowers, it's been 18 months without a payment. That ends in October — ready or not.

The interest-free federal student loan payment pause, known as a forbearance, was extended three times after it initially went into effect in March 2020 as a way to help reduce the financial blow many borrowers experienced as a result of the pandemic.

But with payments set to resume in a few months, servicers — the companies that manage student loan payments — are already fielding thousands of calls a day from borrowers seeking student loan help, according to Scott Buchanan, executive director of the Student Loan Servicing Alliance, a nonprofit trade organization for student loan servicers. Time is running out for both servicers and loan borrowers to prepare for repayment.

While Education Secretary Miguel Cardona has indicated it's not "out of the question" to extend the loan forbearance beyond Sept. 30, for now borrowers should be prepared for bills to come due sometime in October (they're supposed to be notified at least 21 days prior to their exact billing date).

TALK WITH YOUR SERVICER NOW

Servicers are expecting borrower demand for help to increase and may have trouble keeping up. The repayment system has never been turned off before, so no one is sure what restarting it simultaneously for 42.9 million people will look like. "We don't have any guidance from the department (of Education) about what a resumption strategy would look like," says Buchanan. "We are in the time frame where those plans need to be communicated; it cannot wait."

Richard Cordray, the newly appointed head of the Education Department's federal student aid office, told The Washington Post for a story on June 11



In this May 7, 2021 file photo, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley graduates sit social distanced in the early morning sunrise during their commencement ceremony at the schools parking lot in Edinburg, Texas.

Associated Press

that restarting payments was "a very complex situation" and said the office planned to provide more information to servicers soon. He also said the department planned to hold the servicers accountable by setting rigorous performance benchmarks.

Despite the uncertainty, if you're worried about your ability to make payments, there's no downside to contacting your servicer now to beat the rush, says Buchanan. Ask about your best options to manage payments, depending on your situation.

If you're not sure who your servicer is, log in to your My Federal Student Aid account to find out. To ensure you don't miss any notifications, check that your contact information is up to date on your loan servicer's website and in your StudentAid.gov profile.

KNOW YOUR REPAYMENT OPTIONS

"Your options are not 'pay or default,'" says Megan Coval, vice president of policy and federal relations at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. "There are options in between for lowering payments. Nobody,

including the federal government, wants to see you go into default."

Default happens after roughly nine months of late federal loan payments. It can result in a damaged credit score, wage garnishment, withheld tax refunds and other financial burdens.

— If payments will be a hardship: Enrolling in an income-driven repayment plan sets payments at a portion of your income, which could be \$0 if you're out of work or underemployed. Or you could opt to pause payments (with interest collecting) using an unemployment deferment or forbearance.

— If you were delinquent before the pause: Your loans will be reset into "good standing." Making monthly payments on time will help you retain that status. But if you think you might miss a payment or you don't think you can afford payments altogether, contact your servicer about enrolling in an income-driven plan.

— If you were in default before the pause: Contact your loan holder or the education department's default resolution group to find out how to enter into

loan rehabilitation and get back into good standing.

FIND A LEGIT RESOURCE

Servicers may be your first point of contact, but they don't have to be your last. You may have other needs your servicer isn't providing, such as financial difficulty beyond your student loans or legal advice.

Cash-strapped borrowers can find legitimate student loan help for free with organizations such as The Institute of Student Loan Advisors. Other student loan help, such as a credit counselor or a lawyer, will charge fees. You can find reputable credit counselors through organizations such as the National Foundation for Credit Counseling.

Financial planners can also help, but it's best to look for one with student loan expertise, such as a certified student loan professional. You can find legal assistance, including advice on debt settlement and pursuing bankruptcy, with lawyers who specialize in student loans or with legal services in your state as listed by the National Consumer Law Center.

If your issue is with your servicer, contact the Federal Student Loan Ombudsman

Group, which resolves federal student aid disputes. You can also file a complaint with the Federal Student Aid Feedback Center or the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

AVOID SCAMMERS

Legitimate student loan help organizations won't seek you out with offers of debt resolution through unsolicited texts, emails or phone calls. Most importantly, you don't have to pay anyone to apply to consolidate your debt, enter into an income-driven repayment plan or apply for Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

"The hard and fast rule is that applying for (consolidation and repayment) programs is free," says Kyra Taylor, staff attorney focusing on student loans at the National Consumer Law Center. "I think when people realize what they can do for free, it makes it easier for them to spot scams." And don't fall for any company that promises to forgive your student loans or wait for the government to do so — thus far, no executive action from President Joe Biden or legislation from Congress has come to pass. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Check for purity
- 6 Garden aids
- 11 Common street name
- 12 Tibia's end
- 13 Island ring
- 14 Shopworn
- 15 Emulates Drake
- 17 Slightly
- 18 Feel sorry for
- 20 Whittle down
- 22 Lob path
- 23 Moose's cousin
- 26 From the Arctic
- 28 Jupiter has 79
- 29 Zoo residents
- 31 Put away
- 32 Christmas travelers
- 33 Spur on
- 34 Bar bills
- 36 Narrated
- 38 Wrong
- 40 Paces
- 43 Zellweger of "Judy"
- 44 Cruise ship
- 45 Uneasy feeling
- 46 Periphery

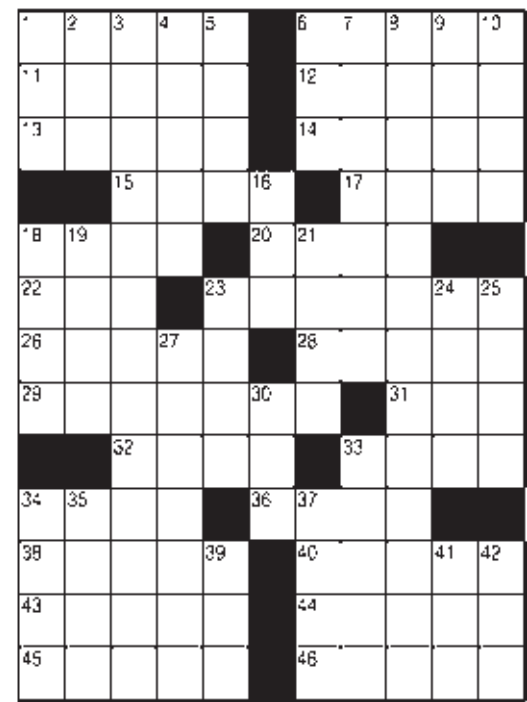
DOWN

- 1 "I — Rock"
- 2 Was inactive
- 3 New Olympics sport in 2021
- 4 Soothe
- 5 Puppy sound
- 6 Holds
- 7 Smallest Great Lake
- 8 New Olympics sport in 2021
- 9 First name in scat
- 10 Plant starter
- 16 Sauna site
- 18 One of a bear trio
- 19 Golfer's choice
- 21 Prepares for war
- 23 Outcropping
- 24 Aware of
- 25 Not new
- 27 Stockpiles



Yesterday's answer

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 13 Island ring | 5 Puppy sound | 16 Sauna site | 30 Set fire to |
| 14 Shopworn | 6 Holds | 18 One of a bear trio | 33 Kilt pattern |
| 15 Emulates Drake | 7 Smallest Great Lake | 19 Golfer's choice | 34 Skater Lipinski |
| 17 Slightly | 8 New Olympics sport in 2021 | 21 Prepares for war | 35 Flock response |
| 18 Feel sorry for | 9 First name in scat | 23 Outcropping | 37 Eyeball |
| 20 Whittle down | 10 Plant starter | 24 Aware of | 39 Harden |
| 22 Lob path | 27 Stockpiles | 41 Casual shirt | 42 Fourth-yr. students |



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-25

CRYPTOQUOTE

W H L C U E I X W A S O A M F V U X U L

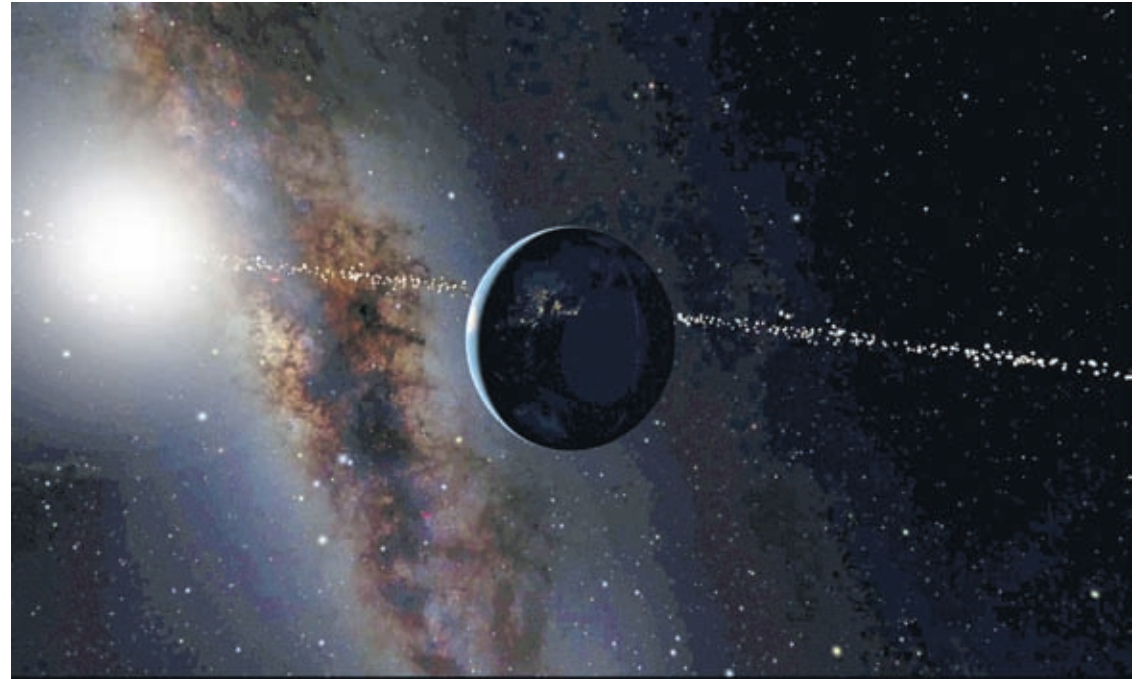
J Z N W K W Q L Z H G Q V L L E U W

F L Z H G O H F O M E S X U U N W N W A

O S O X G U A L — X Z N V E N L Z N

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I'D TAKE THE AWE OF UNDERSTANDING OVER THE AWE OF IGNORANCE ANY DAY. — DOUGLAS ADAMS

Can ET see us? Study finds many stars with prime Earth view



This illustration provided by the American Museum of Natural History depicts the planet Earth, center, with the Sun in the background.

Associated Press

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

Feeling like you are being watched? It could be from a lot farther away than you think.

Astronomers took a technique used to look for life on other planets and flipped it around — so instead of looking to see what's out there, they tried to see what places could see us. There's a lot.

Astronomers calculated that 1,715 stars in our galactic neighborhood — and hundreds of probable Earth-like planets circling those stars — have had an unobstructed view of Earth during human civilization, according to a study Wednesday in the journal Nature.

"When I look up at the sky, it looks a little bit friendlier because it's like, maybe somebody is waving," said study lead author Lisa Kaltenegger, director of the Carl Sagan Institute at Cornell University.

Even though some experts, including the late Stephen Hawking, warn against reaching out to aliens because they could harm us, Kaltenegger said it doesn't matter. If those planets have advanced life, someone out there could conclude that there is life back here based on oxygen in our atmosphere, or by the

radio waves from human sources that have swept over 75 of the closest stars on her list.

"Hiding is not really an option," she said.

One way humans look for potentially habitable planets is by watching them as they cross in front of the star they are orbiting, which dims the stars' light slightly. Kaltenegger and astrophysicist Jacqueline Faherty of the American Museum of Natural History used the European Space Agency's Gaia space telescope to turn that around, looking to see what star systems could watch Earth as it passes in front of the sun. They looked at the 331,312 stars within 326 light-years of Earth. One light-year is 5.9 trillion miles. The angle to see Earth pass in front of the sun is so small that only the 1,715 could see Earth at some point in the last 5,000 years, including 313 that no longer can see us because we've moved out of view. Another 319 stars will be able to see Earth in the next 5,000 years, including a few star systems where scientists have already spotted Earth-like planets, prime candidates for contact. That brings the total to more than 2,000 star systems with an Earth view.

The closest star on Kaltenegger's list is the red dwarf

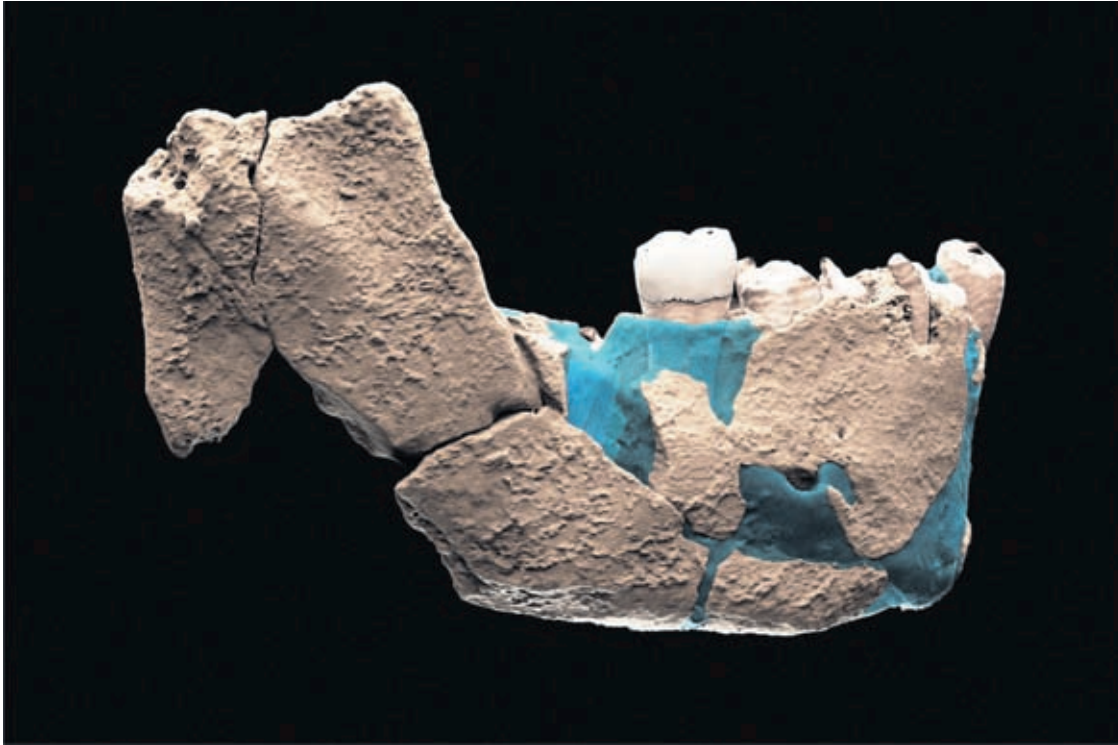
star Wolf 359, which is 7.9 light-years away. It's been able to see us since the disco era of the mid 1970s. Carnegie Institution for Science planetary scientist Alan Boss, who wasn't part of the study, called it "provocative." He said in addition to viewing Earth moving in front of the star, space telescopes nearby could spot us even if the cosmic geometry is wrong: "So intelligent civilizations who build space telescopes could be studying us right now."

So why haven't we heard from them?

It takes a long time for messages and life to travel between stars and civilizations might not last long. So between those two it's enough to limit the chances for civilizations to exchange "emails and TikTok videos," Boss said in his own email. "So we should not expect aliens to show up anytime soon."

Or, Kaltenegger said, life in the cosmos, could just be rare. What's exciting about the study is that it tells scientists "where to point our instruments," said outside astronomer Seth Shostak of the SETI Institute that searches for extraterrestrial intelligence. "You might know where to look for the aliens!" □

120,000-year-old fossils in Israel link to human family tree



This undated image provided by Tel Aviv University in June 2021 shows a virtual reconstruction of a human ancestor mandible found in Nesher Ramla, Israel.

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bones found in an Israeli quarry are from a branch of the human evolutionary tree and are 120,000 to 140,000 years old, scientists reported Thursday.

A team of anthropologists spent years analyzing the fragments of a skull, lower jaw bone and tooth that were uncovered in Nesher Ramla in 2010, comparing them to hundreds of fossils around the world from different eras.

The researchers determined that the fossils likely came from a hominin group closely related to Neanderthals and sharing many of their features, such as the shape of the lower jaw. The scientists also believe that there are enough similarities to link this group to other populations found in prior cave excavations in Israel dating to around 400,000 years ago.

"The teeth have some unique features that enable us to draw a line between these populations," said Tel Aviv University dental anthropologist Rachel Sarig, a co-author of the paper published Thursday in the journal Science.

This group probably inhabited the region from around 400,000 to 100,000 years ago, said Tel Aviv

University physical anthropologist Israel Hershkovitz, another co-author. He said the remains found at Nesher Ramla are likely from "some of the last survivors of a once very dominant group in the Middle East." Prior research has shown that homo sapiens — modern humans — also lived in the region at the same time.

Many scientists believe that the arrival of homo sapiens in Europe presaged the decline of Neanderthals there, but the story may have been different in the Levant region — the crossroads between North Africa and Eurasia.

The new findings add to re-

search showing that homo sapiens and Neanderthal-like groups overlapped in the Middle East over a significant amount of time, probably tens of thousands of years.

There were likely cultural and genetic exchanges between the groups, the paper authors suggest. "The Neanderthal story can no longer be told as a European story only. It's a much more complicated story," said Hershkovitz.

Sheela Athreya, a Texas A&M University paleoanthropologist who was not involved in the study, said the new research "gives us a lot to think about in terms of the history of population

groups in this region, and how they may have interacted with populations in other regions, in Europe and North Africa."

The Nesher Ramla fossils "look like something on a lineage heading toward Neanderthal," said Eric Delson, a paleoanthropologist at Lehman College in New York who was not involved in the study. He characterized the findings as "fossils of what appears to be an intermediate variety — this group may be predecessors to Neanderthals in this area." □

Associated Press



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In 'Good on Paper,' Iliza Shlesinger becomes a leading lady

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

Even when she's technically off, comedian Iliza Shlesinger is always working. During quarantine she did a full tour of drive-in stand-up shows, refined a new hour of material, launched an online cooking show with her husband and secured a book deal. And on a recent "down day" in Nashville before presenting at the CMT Awards the next evening, she's not relaxing: She's doing interviews for her new movie, "Good on Paper," which hits Netflix Wednesday.

"I've just always been very driven," Shlesinger said. "And it was never about being driven in any particular direction other than up." That means for her, the answer is always yes. To the meeting. To the audition. To the gig. To the tour. "Have act. Will travel," she laughs.

Shlesinger is on a forever quest for the elusive Hollywood "yes" and said everything she's gotten she's either created for herself or has been hard fought. It's not that she hasn't had successes already. In 2008, she became the youngest person ever (and first and only woman) to win NBC's "Last Comic Standing." Since then she's written a book, hosted five Netflix stand-up specials, a Free-form late-night talk show and created and starred in



This image released by Netflix shows Ryan Hansen, left, and Iliza Shlesinger in a scene from "Good On Paper."

Associated Press

a sketch series in addition to regularly touring.

She also auditions constantly and despite a few breaks in films like "Instant Family," "Spenser Confidential" and "Pieces of a Woman," is no stranger to rejection. (It's just a coincidence that two of them starred Mark Wahlberg.) She is, she likes to say, the queen of the general meeting.

So she didn't take it for granted when she clicked with a producer who wanted to make "Good on Paper," which is her first produced screenplay and first leading role in a film. The project is as personal as they come: it's based on something that really happened to her.

Years ago, Shlesinger met a guy on a plane. Something seemed a little off, but she fell hard. Then it all started to unravel. She realized he'd been lying about

everything from day one, from his college to his job on down. The experience was awful, she said, until she started putting it down on the page.

"It was cathartic, you know? It was a way to make something funny out of something truly horrific," she said. "The screenplay really became a sort of respite. I was constantly auditioning, constantly getting rejected, always on the road, always doing stand-up. I would turn to this screenplay it would always remind me, you're in control of your own destiny as an artist."

In 2018 she met producer Paul Bernon and much to her surprise, when he said he wanted to make the movie, he meant it. They enlisted Kimmy Gatewood to direct. She suggested "Veronica Mars" veteran Ryan Hansen for the role of

the lying suitor. Shlesinger hadn't heard of him but liked that he wanted to "play a liar and a narcissist." "A lot of leading men don't," she said. "They want to be Captain America." Hansen said he was a fan going in, having known her from the stand-up specials. Although he didn't even meet her until the table reads, he quickly realized, "How incredible she really is and what a good writer and actress and standup (she is)."

"She's everything," he said. Shlesinger called on Margaret Cho to be the best friend and then she and Gatewood had a bit of a free-for-all casting many of their funny friends in other roles. All the parts were just offered. She didn't want to make anyone jump through hoops.

"We really wanted to be generous with this movie.

Like, you know your friend is funny, you can trust them with two lines," she said. "I was doing that because nobody ever did that for me. We have a guy who plays the director in the movie who is an actor who is also is my favorite bartender at our favorite restaurant in L.A. I knew he was an actor. I thought, why not give it to him?"

And on set she took her role as the top person on the call sheet seriously, wanting to make a happy, fun work environment for everyone. Now, she's just preparing for the world to discover the film.

"This story is actually about an incredibly normal girl who wasn't hurting anyone and didn't need to learn a lesson or be taken down a peg," she said. "I think a lot of women will relate to that."

"I hope people see this movie. I hope people want me to write movies for them. I hope people want me to star in their movies. Everything I do, I do with the intention of opening a door to get to do bigger and better things on my own creative terms," she said. "Sky's the limit. I'll put on a play on Mars, I don't care!"

Over quarantine Shlesinger saw a lot of her peers using the lack of a stage as an opportunity to take a break. She kept working. She wanted to stay sharp. □

Guitarist quits Mumford & Sons to 'speak freely' on politics



In this Sunday, May 26, 2019 file photo, Winston Marshall of Mumford & Sons performs at the BottleRock Napa Valley Music Festival at Napa Valley Expo, in Napa, Calif.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Winston Marshall, a founding member of folk-rock group Mumford & Sons, announced

Thursday that is leaving the band so that he can "speak freely" about political issues. Marshall took

a break from the band in March after sparking a social media storm by tweeting admiration for "Unmasked," a book by right-wing writer-activist Andy Ngo that attacked far-left militant groups collectively known as antifa.

Marshall was accused online of endorsing the far right, but said Thursday that "nothing could be further from the truth. I condemn unequivocally all political extremism, be it of the Right or Left." Marshall, who plays guitar and banjo with the group, said his bandmates had "invited me to con-

tinue with them," but he had decided to leave so that he could "speak freely without them suffering the consequences."

Marshall said that "as long as I am a member of the band, speaking my mind on the evils of political extremism could bring them trouble. My loyalty and love for them cannot permit that." Marshall said he plans to undertake new creative projects, "as well as speaking and writing on a variety of issues."

Earlier this year Marshall co-founded Hong Kong Link Up, a charity that works to

integrate Hong Kongers settling in Britain because of increasing political repression in the semi-autonomous Chinese city state.

Formed in London in 2007, Mumford & Sons have had huge success with their jangly folk-rock and won the album of the year Grammy for their 2012 record "Babel." "We wish you all the best for the future, Win, and we love you man," the three other band members — Marcus Mumford, Ben Lovett and Ted Dwane — wrote on Instagram in response to the announcement. □

Expansion Seattle Kraken hire Dave Hakstol as first coach

By **TIM BOOTH**
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — The Seattle Kraken hired Dave Hakstol on Thursday as head coach of the expansion franchise that will begin play this fall. Seattle will be Hakstol's second head coaching job in the NHL. He coached the Philadelphia Flyers for three-plus seasons from 2015-19 and spent the past two years as a Toronto Maple Leafs assistant.

The hiring was a surprise move by Seattle general manager Ron Francis, completing a process that started with an initial interview in the summer of 2020. Francis said there were eight candidates who had formal interviews but Hakstol's name never seemed to be mentioned as a candidate. "On our end we just had the conversations, we talked about things and I think a lot of that credit goes to Dave," Francis said. "He just didn't talk about it to anybody and when you don't do that it doesn't get out there."

The 52-year-old Hakstol coached the Flyers to two playoff appearances but both ended with first-round losses and he was fired midway through his fourth season. He coached at the University of North Dakota for 11 years and was an off-the-board hire six years ago for then-Philadelphia general manager Ron Hextall, just as he is for Francis this time.

"I am honored to be joining this tremendous group," Hakstol said. "When I first



Philadelphia Flyers head coach Dave Hakstol gives instructions during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins in Pittsburgh, in this Saturday, Dec. 1, 2018, file photo.

Associated Press

saw the arena, I was blown away. It is such a unique venue. I am looking forward to being a part of the group that builds a team that plays with pride, passion and selflessness for the city of Seattle."

The expectations for the Kraken are success from the start and the team will join the Pacific Division with the Arizona Coyotes shifting to the Central.

Hakstol's task will be significant, trying to equal the success of the league's last expansion franchise, however unrealistic it might be for the Kraken to match the Golden Knights. Vegas reached the Stanley Cup

Final in its inaugural season and has made the playoffs in all four years since its inception.

"It's really about building with good quality people to begin with, building it the right way," Hakstol said. "Making sure that we're building not only a team that can come out of the gate and play with a lot of pride, passion and have success, but also work towards building the depth of the organization for not only that early success, but to have that sustainable success."

The hiring fit Francis' original timeline, which had Seattle's coaching search

settled before the end of June, well before the July 21 expansion draft and July 23 NHL draft, where the Kraken will have the No. 2 overall selection.

Hakstol got the job over former Arizona coach Rick Tocchet and others who interviewed multiple times. Francis, Hakstol and Seattle assistant GM Jason Botterill were together with Canada's team at the 2019 world championship.

"We got to spend four weeks together over in Austria and Slovakia, and I got to know him as a person and kind of watch his work ethic and how he operated and sort of building that

respect for what he can do," Francis said.

While Hakstol ended up with the job, he may not have been the initial favorite. Gerard Gallant seemed the obvious option for Seattle due to his experience leading Vegas through its record-setting first season, which ended with a loss to Washington in the final. Gallant opted for the chance with the New York Rangers over potentially taking on the challenges of another first-year franchise. The Kraken are expected to begin training camp in September with the season likely to begin in mid-October. □

NFL players who voluntarily opt out get no stipend this year

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

NFL players must decide by July 2 if they plan to opt out of playing this season due to COVID-19 concerns, though voluntary opt-outs will not be paid any stipend this year.

In a memo sent to clubs Wednesday and obtained by The Associated Press, the league and the NFL Players Association agreed that only high-risk players will receive a stipend of \$350,000. Voluntary opt-outs got a \$150,000 stipend in 2020.

To qualify as a high-risk, a player must have opted out last season and have an effective contract executed before Oct. 1, 2020, or have been newly diagnosed with a CDC-defined higher-risk condition. Rookies wouldn't be eligible unless they were diagnosed with a high-risk condition after signing a contract.

A total of 67 players opted out last year before vaccines were avail-

able.

The contract for any player who opts out will toll at the end of the year and all provisions of the 2021 contract will become applicable to 2022. For players under contract beyond 2021, all subsequent years will be extended.

The NFL and the players' union also agreed that fully vaccinated players who have a per game roster bonus are eligible to receive that bonus even if they miss a game because of a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Teams may not be permitted to challenge if a player's COVID-19 infection is football-related if the player was fully vaccinated at the time he contracted the virus and the player received an initial negative test upon timely reporting to preseason training camp. Also, a team can't challenge if a fully vaccinated player tests positive for COVID-19 upon returning from a bye week. □

2021 Tour de France preview: Pogacar vs Roglic rematch

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**
AP Sports Writer

Not so long ago, Tadej Pogacar was a just a promising outsider still learning the ropes of cycling's biggest race.

His rise to become the second-youngest winner of the Tour de France in September last year has changed everything: the 22-year-old returns to the three-week event as the odds-on favorite to defend his title.

Going from an ambitious Tour rookie to defending champion in such a short time could have been an unsettling experience.

But Pogacar has perfectly dealt with his sudden rise to stardom, linking his Tour triumph with victories this season at the UAE Tour, Tirenno-Adriatico and the prestigious one-day classic Liege-Bastogne-Liege.

Since his remarkable feat on the slopes of the Planche des Belles Filles where he snatched the coveted race leader's yellow jersey in a high-drama time trial, Pogacar has kept improving. He looks even stronger this year, backed by a powerful squad entirely at his service.

"We can't wait for the challenge," he said ahead of Saturday's opening stage in the western Brittany region.

Contrary to last year, when he started the race with no personal ambition and rode with minimal support



In this Sept 19, 2020 file photo, Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar wins and takes the overall leader's yellow jersey as he crosses the finish line of stage 20 of the Tour de France cycling race, an individual time trial over 36.2 kilometers (22.5 miles), from Lure to La Planche des Belles Filles, France.

Associated Press

in high mountains during his incredible fairy tale, the UAE-Team Emirates leader will be surrounded by a bunch of solid sidemen — Davide Formolo, Rui Costa, Rafal Majka, Brandon McNulty — tasked to pace him in altitude.

"Our aim for this year is clear: we are going to try and defend the title which Tadej claimed last year, so we have built a team around him," said team manager Joxean Matxin Fernandez.

"Obviously we'll be heavily marked by the other teams and it's not going to be an easy task." Pogacar's biggest rival last

year was another rider from Slovenia, Primož Roglič. The Jumbo-Visma team leader wore the yellow jersey for 11 days on last year's Tour and had victory in sight only to crack on the eve of the final stage in a spectacular reversal of fortunes. Such a turnaround could have undone his morale for good. But Roglič has recovered in style, very quickly, and is once again among the top contenders.

Right after the Tour last year, he won Liege-Bastogne-Liege and the Spanish Vuelta.

In April he was stronger than Pogacar at the Itzu-

lia Basque Country and has privileged training at altitude in recent weeks in order to arrive fresh on the starting line, ready to tackle the 3,414 kilometers (2,121 miles) of three-week odyssey across France.

To challenge the defending champion, Roglič can count on experienced and talented teammates including the versatile Wout Van Aert, Steven Kruijswijk, Mike Teunissen, Robert Gesink and time-trial specialist Tony Martin.

Jumbo-Visma has arguably become cycling's strongest team, knocking Ineos Grenadiers off its perch last

year. But the British outfit managed by Dave Brailsford has not given up its past luster and supremacy for good. Ineos-Grenadiers won the Giro this spring with Egan Bernal and will be starting the Tour with strong credentials.

With three Grand Tour winners leading the team — Geraint Thomas, Richard Carapaz and Tao Geoghegan Hart — and a bunch of "super-domestiques" to ride in support, Brailsford's squad has the collective strength to reclaim cycling's pole position.

"We won't win this tour by sitting in the wheels. We have the team to make it a racers' race, take the initiative, seize every opportunity and make our opposition focus for every kilometer of every stage," Brailsford said. "We have changed our race philosophy this season to being more open and aggressive."

On July 7, the peloton will tackle an unprecedented double ascent of the famed Mont Ventoux on the same stage, halfway through the race.

The Ventoux is a daunting trek known for its lunar-looking landscape when exhausted riders eventually reach the top.

On Stage 11 of 21, the riders will tackle the mountain from two different entry points for the first time before a long downhill to the finish line. □

Jersey boys: MLB to use unique uniforms for All-Star Game



This handout provided by Major League Baseball shows the front and back of the 2021 All-Star jersey unveiled Thursday, June 24, 2021, that will be used for the July 13 game at Denver's Coors Field.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball is getting rid of club uniforms and caps for the All-Star Game in favor of specially-designed league outfits.

MLB released the looks Thursday that will be used for the July 13 game at Denver's Coors Field.

The host National League has white jerseys and the American League blue. Each two-button jersey features three red letters for a player's club arranged vertically on the left side with the club logo superimposed over the first and second letter, in black or white for NL teams and khaki for AL.

Stars on the back will mark each player's All-Star selection total, and the right sleeves have the MLB All-Star logo patch.

Caps have team logos mostly in red, with some white and blue, superimposed over a star in the Rockies' purple with white points.

Clubs uniforms traditionally had been used for the All-Star Game since its inception in 1933. □